

Update

Fall 2012

Volunteer Mediators Where are they now?



Barb Miller

I have found my connection with the Mediation program very helpful in my neighborhood: I participated in the rewriting of the neighborhood covenant and referred one of my neighbors to the program to settle a dispute of several years with another neighbor (they resolved the dispute in a meeting at one of their homes and the trees have been trimmed ☺). I also have acted as a sort of neutral but interested third part in another set of neighbors' concern over a tree (I live in a neighborhood with a view...trees are a big deal here). I also have had limited success in mediating conflicts at my church, and gave a very well-received lay sermon on peacemaking last year. Beyond that, I continue to pursue an avocation as a classical singer, I lead and participate in book discussion groups, and I teach classes at the Lifetime Learning Center in Seattle. This year I had a dream vacation to western Austria to attend the Schubertiade and hike in the mountains.

I'm still Right Here! Honest. No mediating outside of the program, only within. I've started a winery in Woodinville ("Array Cellars") that specializes in Washington State chardonnay, and donates \$1 a bottle sold to charities supporting victims of domestic violence in King County. My mediation skills follow me everywhere I go, as long as I stay mindful. I'm most thankful for what the program has instilled in me, and the efforts of Andrew and Cheryl in making it happen.



Henry Smilowicz



Barbara Barnes

Mediation training and experience has been very valuable and even transformative in my life. The BNMP staff has been wonderfully supportive, encouraging and helpful. While I wish I had mediation training decades ago I am using the training continually. It has been helpful as President of my Toastmaster's club, in relationships and professionally. My coaching practice has expanded to include workshops and speeches on conflict resolution and communication topics. Next week I am speaking on developing listening skills. It is fun when friends call and ask me how to present clear messages or how to get disentangled from conflict. Of course, family life is where we find the greatest "arena for conflict and potential for resolution," and just applying good listening, seriously considering the other person's perspective make a huge difference. My family is thrilled!! The people I've worked with and gotten to know through BNMP have been great and some have become close friends. Thanks!

I am in the area, busy with family and real estate :) I love applying my mediation skills with clients and in negotiations with other realtors! Hope you're enjoying our beautiful summer.



Ilana Vayman



Photo by **Jack Mahler**

Jack Mahler has been a volunteer mediator with the Neighborhood and Parent-Teen mediation programs for the last seven years. He is currently a collaborative law child specialist and mediator, a Family Law GAL/parenting investigations/coach, a co-parenting coach, a mediator for cases involving parenting plans, family, parent-teen, elder and general cases, and a multi-party disputes facilitator. He also consults with Family Law attorneys/GALs on difficult cases.



Vincent Humphrey

I have been able to use many of the tips and tools from the Bellevue Neighborhood Mediation Program in my legal practice. The one that sticks out most prevalently is being able to adequately reflect back to my clients what I have heard them say. This seemingly simple tool has brought great clarity to many situations, and has lead

to great success. Becoming a better listener is an aspiration that many more people should subscribe to!



Mia Angela Barbera

I have been drawn to the field of mediation for 20 years, since I was a client with King County DRC. The COB program and mediators provide an exquisite service and I am grateful for the privilege to be part of this team. I am touched by the gratitude expressed by clients. The gift

of being heard, with patience and what I call in my work, *appreciative curiosity*, allows the tunnel vision, intense emotion and blame associated with conflict to soften, and new possibilities often emerge. Beyond the task to resolve a conflict, I think the community members we serve, learn they have options in how they handle their own experience and presence in relationship. I am learning how important a skilled 3rd person is, to catapult us out of our blindness and access our intelligence. Working with Gwen, Andrew and Cheryl and observing their skillfulness, I'm driven to pursue more training in this far-reaching area of community building and compassionate intelligence.

Update on Foreclosure Mediation

Last summer BNMP began providing foreclosure mediations under a 2011 state law that requires lenders to mediate with homeowners before foreclosing (homeowners must be referred by a housing counselor or attorney). The program encourages parties to explore alternatives to foreclosure, such as loan modification, short sale, and cash for keys. Homeowners get a face-to-face meeting with bank representatives and a chance to understand and evaluate their options.

BNMP has received 24 referrals from the Department of Commerce and has conducted 12 mediations. We have seen some positive results recently, including loan modifications, yet a fair number of mediations have ended in no agreement. This was particularly true in the early days of the program when procedures were still being developed and many program requirements were misunderstood and questioned by the parties.

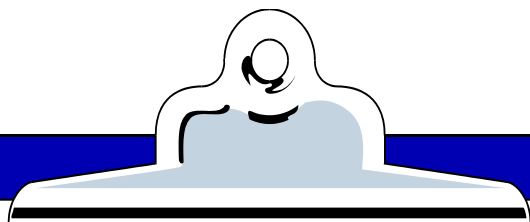
In response to these early challenges, BNMP co-manager Andrew Kidde invited bank attorneys and housing advocates to City Hall last November to discuss their concerns. Several issues were identified, but a lot more work was needed to make foreclosure mediations run smoothly. Kidde and Maralise Hood, director of the Pierce County DRC, ended up facilitating several stakeholder meetings in Olympia. These meetings resulted in a revised, "clean-up" bill passed by the Legislature this spring. The bill took effect this summer. Since then, cases are convening more smoothly and participation feels more positive.

In late summer the Washington State Attorney General awarded \$2.1 million dollars to Resolution Washington, the association of 20 non-profit Dispute Resolution Centers in Washington (BNMP is one of these). The funding is provided to support mediation programs around the State as well as training for mediators. These funds are a result of the national mortgage settlement between the federal government and the country's five largest mortgage servicers.

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Graduates of Basic Mediation Training 2012:

Vincent Humphrey, Jeff Siegmeth, Sasha Philip, Brenda Antos, Amy Potts, and Rayanna Kiswani



Parent—Teen Update

By Gwen Jones

After completing a very successful Parent-Teen Mediation Program training we have a wonderful new group of volunteer mediators, and now that the new school year has begun we are transitioning to fall activities. Many of you are waiting to observe mediations and I will email those opportunities to you as they come up.



We have a couple of important In-Service trainings coming up in the next two months. On Wed., Sept. 26th from 6 to 8 PM in room 1E-118 we will learn about volunteering at School Engagement Workshops. We'll talk about the what happens at the workshops and how our volunteers can help. Volunteering at School Engagement Workshops is a great way to practice using your mediation skills while helping students and families.

Then on Wednesday, October 17th from 7 to 9 PM in room 1E-120, we're inviting families of our new volunteers to "Family Night" so they can learn more about the program. An invitation will be sent to all of the families. I hope to see you all then!

BNMP Training Opportunities For Mediators and Conciliators

Conciliation Training

Wed., Oct. 17th 5-9 PM in Room 1E-118

Fri., Oct. 19th 9-5 PM in Room 1E-118

Wed., Oct. 24th 5-9 PM in Room 1E-118

Parent-Teen In-Service Trainings:

Training for Volunteering at School Engagement Workshops

Wed. Sept. 26th, from 6-8 PM in Room 1E-118

Family Night: An Orientation to Mediation

Wed. Oct. 17th, from 7-9 PM in Room 1E-120

Neighborhood In-Service Training:

Advanced Mediation Training: Gender and Communication Style

Wed. Nov. 14th, from 6:30-8:00 PM
in Room 1E-120

Conflict Coaching:

A Three-Day Basic Training

With Robin Amadei

January 9-11, 2013, 8:30-4:30 each day

Registration received on or before Dec. 1st:

\$550 for mediation program volunteers

After Dec. 1st: \$600

To register contact Robin Amadei at

303-604-1960 or RAmadei@aol.com

Program Staff:

Program Co-Manager:	Cheryl Cohen	-	452-5222
Program Co-Manager:	Andrew Kidde	-	452-5288
Program Assistant	Gwen Jones	-	452-2897

City of Bellevue website: <http://www.bellevuewa.gov>
(Look for the Mediation Program under "Neighborhood Information")

Parent-Teen Mediation Training

Class of 2012



Top row left to right: Mingbin Huang, Derek Sikkema, Samuel Winter, Otto Shih, Nuria Rodriguez Rivas, Nicolas Germanos, Patricia Landy, Merrill Hunt-Paez, Ivy Roberts, Erin Lee, Melissa Valasky, Jori Swartz, Jennifer Sprague, Gwen Jones. Bottom row left to right: Jenny Winkler, Rachael Kuhn, Alexandra Smerekanych, Marie Hayman, Cannon Roe, Maily Wirks, Lorea Gwo, Mark So. Not pictured: Ahrif McKee.

BELLEVUE
NEIGHBORHOOD MEDIATION PROGRAM

City of Bellevue Department of Planning and Community Development
P.O. Box 90012 Bellevue, WA 98009-9012